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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
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SUBJECT: Syria/PDRK, US/Syria, Syria/EU, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestinian Territories, Rice's Upcoming Visit to Region (6/29-7/2)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on July 2 reported the July 1 meeting of Assistant Secretary General of the Ba'ath Party, Abdullah al-Ahmar, with Kim Tai Jung, Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Relations' Bureau at the Central Committee of the Democratic Korean Work Party. The two reviewed current developments in the region and the latest developments in the Korean peninsula, in addition to current challenges resulting from policies of hegemony and aggression that pose a threat to the security and stability in both areas and the world. Al-Ahmar stressed Syria's appreciation for the PDRK's support for Syria's right to all of the occupied Golan and for a just and comprehensive peace in line with legitimate international resolutions.

Government-owned Al-Thawra Chief Editor Abd-al-Fattah al-Awad criticized the US ban on travel to the United States by Syrian officials and pro-Syria Lebanese figures, charging the US administration of correcting its mistakes by making more mistakes and expressing pessimism that the Bush administration will accept facts on the ground and stop creating chaos in every place where it sets a foot.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Assistant Secretary General of the Ba'ath Party al-Ahmar holds talks with Tai Jong, Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Relations Bureau at the Central Committee of the Democratic Korean Work Party, stressing importance of boosting bilateral relations" (Government-owned Al-Ba'ty, 7/2)

"Former Deputy German Foreign Minister Helmut Schaefer: There will be no peace without dialogue with Syria" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/1)

"Two European Parliament officials: We support dialogue with Syria, and we will not freeze the partnership association agreement" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/1)

"Cautious calm prevails in Nahr el-Bared refugee camp after violent confrontations. Warnings against continuing US and NATO penetrations into Lebanon continue" (Government-owned Tishreen,

7/1)

"Lebanese President Lahoud is determined to turn over the presidency at the end of his term of office in a way that brings the Lebanese together. Lebanese Opposition: The governing team is implementing a US agenda" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/30)

"Former Lebanese Minister Arslan: What we are witnessing in Lebanon is a continuation of the July aggression. The governing team has no nationalist conscience " (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/2)

"Sheikh al-Gharib, Head of the Druze Sect in Lebanon: Syria has always stood by Lebanon" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/2)

"British figures call on new British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to withdraw British troops from Iraq immediately" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/2)

"US Republican Senator Richard Lugar calls for holding a meeting on Iraq with the participation of Iraq's neighboring countries" (Government-owned AL-Thawra, 7/2)

"Disclosure of a new US massacre in Baquba; 350 Iraqis killed, 150 houses demolished in US air assaults" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/2)

"President Bush faces a bloody summer in Iraq. 100 US troops killed during June" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/1)

"The Iraqi Reconciliation Front suspends its participation in government meetings. Five US troops killed, 7 wounded south of Baghdad" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/30)

"Six Palestinians martyred in Khan Younis and al-Maghazi refugee camp. Hamas: We reject the deployment of international forces in Gaza" (Government-owned Tisrheen, 7/1)

"One Palestinian martyred, scores arrested in an Israeli incursion against Nablus, putting the Palestinian authority in an embarrassing situation. The Al-Aqsa Brigades persist in resistance" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/30)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Days Pregnant with Mistakes"

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Chief Editor Abd-al-Fattah al-Awad, chief editor of government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (7/1): "Americans are now confused and bewildered, and in such a case follies increase. US confusion takes many forms, one of which is the US tone in its approach toward Syria.

"Just a short time ago, the Bush administration talked about dialogue, especially in the wake of the Baker-Hamilton report. When Mouallem and Rice met in Sharm al-Sheikh, the impression was that Americans had taken a sip, just a sip, from the cup of wisdom, which made them understand the importance of dialogue.

"But the dose was apparently not enough. Between the call for dialogue and the current nervous and intransigent rejection of it, Bush's administration is showing its confusion and impotence.

"The objective characterization of what is happening is that this administration has exhausted all the futile avenues in its effort to come out of its crises, and I do not say crisis. This is simply because its evil intuition always leads it to the worst options....

"Those who contemplate the policy of the Bush administration find that it tries to correct its mistakes by making more mistakes. Applying new pressure against Syria is part of the series of mistakes the United States is used to making, or we are accustomed to seeing the United States make. There is no longer much optimism that Bush's administration will accept the facts on the ground and stop creating chaos in every place where it sets a dirty foot.

"We need no fortunetellers to foresee that the coming days are pregnant with everything that might prove fateful for the entire region."

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"Bush Persists in His War on Iraq"

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Ali Nasrallah, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (7/1): "The UN inspection commission on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction today closes down its offices without finding any of the alleged weapons that the United States and Britain used as a pretext to invade Iraq.... This coincides with President Bush's appointment of a new adviser for Iraq war affairs and his disgusting claim that the United States is still at war and that the military operation in Iraq is still at its beginning....

"It appears that Bush, who has asked the angry American people to give him more time to achieve victory and success, is determined to continue the course of failure and lies.... Bush does not seem to be one of those who feel ashamed of their acts and conduct, no matter how shameful and disgraceful they might be."

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"Visit and Pessimism"

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Maha Sultan, a political editor in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (7/1): "US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's forthcoming visit to the region causes pessimism among Palestinians.

"The United States, which is now talking about a modified American vision of peace between Palestinians and Israelis, paved the way for this new vision by creating conflicts and infighting among Palestinians.... Rice, in her previous visits to the region, did not actually come to find solutions or defuse tensions. If she did, she would have forced Israel to stop its plan of canceling the Palestinian partner, including the party that is supported by Washington itself...."

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"A Peace Envoy in Full Combat Gear"

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Isam Dari, Chief Editor of government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/30): "Tony Blair is appointed as a peace envoy in full combat gear and with hands stained with the blood of innocent people....

"We recall Blair's lies about Iraq and his position during the Lebanon war last summer.... Arabs in general, and Iraqis, Palestinians, and Lebanese in particular, suffered disasters and tragedies as a result of Blair's American-Israeli policy".

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"The International Quartet and Israeli Obstinacy"

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Ahmad Hamadah, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/29): "Israeli statements confirm that Israel will not withdraw from the West Bank and that there will be no peace negotiations with Palestinians....

"Israel's positions toward peace prove that peace will remain unattainable as long as Israel continues to engage in deception and maneuvers and to deny the rights of the Palestinian people.... Israel has destroyed the Roadmap, has continued to build the separation wall in the West Bank, and is committing the most appalling massacres against the Palestinian people every day....

"The International Quartet's proposals and ideas, therefore, will always fall on deaf Israeli ears...."

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"Between Arrogance and Submission"

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Dr. Haydar Haydar, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/29): "There are increasing US statements confessing that Washington has lost the war in Iraq and must pull its troops out of the country....

"Given this tragic picture, Americans have no choice but to withdraw from Iraq.... Arabs who wagered on the power of the United States have no option but to backtrack from their defeatist positions and join the convoy of the opposing Arabs across the Arab land. If they do this, they will save themselves and their peoples and even win the respect of their enemies. If they do not, history will be very harsh on them."

Corbin